

[Report on the survey regarding the use of international standards.](#)

[Summary of responses to the IFAN questionnaire on the use of international standards.](#)

[Results of the IFAN survey on the use of international standards, including graphs \(slides\).](#)

IFAN (International Federation of Standards Users) has conducted a survey on the use of International Standards. For this purpose a [questionnaire](#) was made available to standards users worldwide. The questionnaire was displayed on the Web sites of IFAN, ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) from the beginning of 2001 until the end of May 2002.

During this period, 288 respondents from 52 countries completed the questionnaire.

Usage figures show that 94% of the respondents are using ISO standards, 45% use IEC standards and 11% use other international standards. This last percentage figure is based on a diversity of national standards and industry standards, considered by the respondents to be international standards, as well as other international standards such as the examples given in the questionnaire.

The results of the question "To what extent do you use international, regional, national and/or company standards" showed that 100% of the respondents are using international standards, with 59% replying that their usage is high. For regional standards, these percentages are 77% / 25% respectively, 90% / 45% for national standards and 76% / 42% for company standards.

Some considerations for further analyses of the percentages for company standards are:

- shortage of national adoptions or translations of international standards;
- the requirements of international standards are too wide for company adoption or are specified in a multitude of standards;
- at international level, a lot of opportunities for standardization are missed.

The figures for ordering international standards show that a major proportion of the respondents order 100 or less international standards per year, 62% consider their price to be too high and only 2% replied that their price is too low. When ordering international standards, the three traditional methods (telephone/fax, post and subscription) are still used widely. However, Webstore and e-mail ordering are starting to overtake the traditional methods. This is underlined by the reply of 62% of the respondents who indicated that they would move immediately to electronic documents and electronic ordering if it were offered by their standards supplier.

However, this does not mean that the 24% who replied that: "standards should be available in paper as well" can be left in the cold. There will be a need for a dual system for a while to come. The current situation regarding which media standards are used in, is that 42% of the respondents replied that they use solely paper standards and only 8% are using standards in electronic format. The other 50% use standards in both formats. A real barrier to the electronic use of standards and, in relation to this, to bringing standards into a company network, are the costs of bringing standards to the desktop of the user.

With regard to inhouse archiving of international standards, it was a surprise to find that 72% replied that withdrawn or replaced standards are archived within their respective companies. Arguments for this are related to: SHE-aspects, legislation, quality, contracts, business needs, safety, certification, static references, corporate standards, products, previous heavy use. Also 75% of the respondents said that lists of withdrawn standards and their replacements are useful in catalogues or Web instances. This should give standards developing organizations some thoughts about an improvement of service to their customers.

One suggestion is to make withdrawn or replaced standards available free of charge to those customers that have bought a current version of the respective standards.

Finally, what is the state of the art concerning international standards and what do we have to do to improve access to and use of international standards?

The greater number of respondents (191: yes, in general; 15: yes, absolutely) expressed the opinion that the content of international standards is adequate with respect to the state of technology. However several suggestions for improvement were made. The most-needed requirements for standards users were identified as:

- A single source or at least a universal system to search for appropriate standards to solve business problems or needs. (This system should also give access to information in respect of new items of standardization or revisions of current standards.)
- Improvement of the information available on content and status of standards prior to purchase.
- National adoptions and national translations of international standards.
- A rethinking of the costs of single standards and the costs of networking standards.
- Improvement of the presentation of the technical content (issues raised by the respondents were: conflicting scopes, consistency, terminology, layout, frequency of changes, lack of technical strength due to the compromises within international standards).
- Summaries of changes in relation to the previous versions.

See the following for more detailed information on the responses to the questionnaire:

[Summary of responses to the IFAN questionnaire on the use of international standards](#)

[Results of the IFAN survey on the use of international standards, including graphs](#)

Summary of responses to the IFAN questionnaire on the use of International Standards 1)

1) For the purposes of the questionnaire, the term international standard includes:

- International standards which are used directly (eg ISO 1234, IEC 61234-1), and
International standards which have been adopted without change as regional and/or national standards.

These normally include the international, regional and/or national acronyms in their reference number and may be identified as in the following examples: DIN ISO 2943, DIN IEC 1234, BS EN 61234-1.

IFAN (International Federation of Standards Users) has recently completed a survey on the use of International Standards. For the purpose of conducting the survey, a questionnaire has been made available to standards users worldwide. The questionnaire was displayed on IFAN Online with links from ISO and IEC websites from the beginning of 2001 to the end of May 2002.

During this period 288 respondents from 52 countries have completed the questionnaire:

Table with 2 columns: Number of respondents, Country. Rows include United Kingdom (47), USA (35), Germany (24), Lithuania (22), Slovenia (17), Switzerland (16), Netherlands (14), Iran (12), Canada and Italy (7), Finland, India and Russia (6), Belgium, China and Pakistan (5), Australia, Croatia and France (4), Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain and Venezuela (2), and a large group of 1 respondent from various countries including Algeria, Austria, Costa Rica, Cyprus, etc.

The summary of the replies to the questionnaire is presented below.

1 Do you use international standards in your work?

- 285 Yes
3 No

2 Which international standards do you use?

- 272 ISO
125 IEC
32 Other

If other, please indicate the names:

Note: 118 respondents ticked the box "Other". However, only 32 questionnaires contained names of international organizations. The other 86 respondents indicated names of regional or national organizations or of their standards. All names of these organizations or of their standards (indicated in 118 replies) are listed below with the number of replies in which they have been indicated.

Table with 2 columns: Number, Names of organizations or their standards. Rows include EN (31), ASTM (20), BS and DIN (16), ITU (15), ANSI and MIL (7), IEEE and IMO (6), API, IATA, JIS and UL (5), ETSI (4), ASME, IPC, NFPA, SAE and W3C (3), and a large list of international organizations (2).

3 To what extent do you use international, regional, national and/or company standards?

Table with 5 columns: Level of use, International, Regional, National, Company. Rows for High, Medium, Low usage levels.

4 How many international standards do you order every year?

- 225 up to 100
31 101-200
14 201-500
5 501-1000
1 more than 1000
1 none

5 How do you order international standards?

- 75 webstore
69 email
120 telephone or telefax
75 postal service
86 subscription service

6 On which media do you use standards?

- 121 paper
22 electronic media
145 paper and electronic media

7 Do you network international standards internally if you buy them in electronic format?

- 78 yes
210 no

8 If your reply to question 7 is "yes" please reply to the subquestion, do you find the costs of networking:

- 39 high
32 about right
12 low

9 Do you archive withdrawn and replaced standards?

- 152 yes, all of them
82 none of them
54 yes some of them, according to the following criteria:

Table with 10 columns: 10 years of applicability after deletion by Law, Acc. Contract situations, Amount of use when current, Archive all, replace selected in used set, Company Standards, Concerning important products; but we can access old standards via our standardisation bodies, Continuing Relevance, Contract Requirements, Contracts, DIN st. ki se nanasap na material di varjenje, For information, for reference in calculation codes, For brownfield projects and maintenance, I am expert in that area/have participated process, If Applicable or deemed to be necessary, If the standardized means of work is already used, If they form basis of our company standard, If we have valid national standard accordingly we don't withdraw them, Impact to our business, Importance for the company, In case of safety and version mgt, Internal Corporate Standards, International for ref for couple of years, ISO9002:1994, Old CE related standards and standards that have been used in product design, On demand, Only company standards, Our specialisation, Part of contracts, Related to our product, Relevance for research/comparison purposes, Relevant to functional safety, Specifically related to IT equipment and ATMs, Those quoted in product documentation or part of the quality process, Those required for use on current contracts, Where referred to in legislation and required for evidence in criminal cases, With more use, Zaradi adgavnosti za stare izdelke

10 Do you consider lists of withdrawn standards in catalogues of international standards useful?

- 216 yes
72 no

11 Do you consider that the prices of international standards are:

- 5 low
103 adequate
180 high

12 Do you use international standards handbooks?

- 129 yes
159 no

13 Do you use international value-added products other than handbooks that are related to standards?

- 41 yes
247 no

If yes, please indicate the product(s):

Table with 1 column: Product(s). Rows include Analyses reports, Directives, Websites, Auto Parts catalogues, Books, Any Material, Catalogues, internet informations, CD, CD ROM for SAE, CD-ROM, CD-ROMS, CE Marking Guides, Communications of association of chemical industry, Databases, Different books, For Example ISO 9000 For Small Business Prepared By TC176/ISO, Hewlett Packard computer, I hope use an iso equipment, IHS Worldwide Global, IHS, ILL, Interregs, ILL standards database, MANUAL, STUDY BOOK, Methods, Monthly/quarterly distributed catalogue, OKO-TEX, AATCC, Perinorm, Perinorm, Perinorm, Russian Magazine "Standards & Quality", Search utilities on the web or in CD, Some Guides, Stahlschlüssel, ASM World Wide Guide, Standardized reports, Those which referenced in standard and their being is necessary, Trainings from organizations, Uster tester-3, uster autosorter-3, Micronaire, Fibrograph, Pressley Strength, Metler tolledo balancers, Schlafhorst Autocner, Crosrol Cards, Rieter Drawings, Rieter B 11, etc., WEB pages, Websites

14 Do you consider the content of international standards to be adequate with respect to the state of technological development?

- 17 yes, absolutely
171 yes, in general
64 sometimes
9 not often
9 no

15 If standards were distributed only on electronic media, would that be acceptable to you?

- 171 yes, immediately
29 yes, in the period of 1 year
18 yes, in the period of 2-5 years
67 no, standards should be available on paper as well

16 What are your greatest problems in ordering international standards?

- 123 problems related to information on standards
45 problems where to buy
80 payment
66 delivery time
19 other(s)
10 none

If other, please indicate the problem(s)

Table with 1 column: Problem(s). Rows include Accessibility, Price, Awareness, ALL STANDARDS CAN NOT BE FOUND IN ONE SOURCE, Availability, Cost, Delay of translation, For National Standards, the Availability, Having them on our electronic supplier's site immediately (there is now a one to two month delay), I experience no problems (We buy direct from BSI), I have no problems with ordering, Identification of the appropriate standards to purchase for specific areas, If it is on paper, Information is not always clear enough for ordering purposes, Information on latest/current release, Internal ordering procedures, Licensing (Copyright) policies of std-publishers are very different (network licence, single user, multi-user etc.), Not available electronically, Our guideline is the czechoslovak standard, Our suppliers consider cost as a real barrier, Paperwork required by my employer, Problems getting EN standards in English from national standardizing body sales point, Problems where to buy for students, sales monopoly, The scope of the ISO documents need to be available prior to purchase in order to verify applicability, we have no facility in India

17 What are your greatest problems in using international standards?

- 82 language
89 technical content
50 media available
35 other(s)
8 none

If other, please indicate the problem(s)

Table with 1 column: Problem(s). Rows include conflicting scopes and duplicity of documents, Cost, Costs and difficulty for students who should be embracing them, cross relations among standards, Customer (Federal Aviation Admin) agreement, Ensuring standard is maintained up-to-date, For National Standards, the Copy Quality and Availability, Frequency of changes and introduction of new standards, quality and consistency of standards, getting people to understand and participate, inconsistent terminology and style of writing, Interpretation, ISO 3166 says that entities (countries) are not necessarily disjoint (non-overlapping). For a few years, the code FX (Metropolitan France) obviously overlapped with FR (France). It would be very useful if the user could be assured that all entities are, It is a jungle, Knowledge, awareness and trainers, Lay out and terminology, Missing national adoptions especially US and Asia/Pacific; numbering of IEC drafts; handling of amendments; no uniform handling and rules of the various organizations, No big one, No problem except when no standards exists, Not having them full text searchable (i.e.in proper pdf), Often, use requires change in our company practices, and are not understood by our suppliers. We then need to train and implement, OTHER EXPENSIVE STANDARDS REFERRED IN THE MAIN ONE, prices and licences for using the standards in the company net, Primerjave stori novi standardi, zamenjave, Riating standards to national health and safety legislation, sometimes bad scanning quality of electronic media, sometimes poor harmonization between standards and with legislation, Standards should have an established format, Teilweise sind die Normen nicht mit dem Anwender abgestimmt. TK's sind manchmal zu weit von der Praxis weg., Terminology: Wide Spread Understanding and Acceptance; To many, the philosophie of health and safety at work ist often very different from the european view, There is no details why it's so specified., They need to be available on-line at a reasonable cost, Typically we find that there is a lack of technical strength that is the result of the compromises needed to get an international standard. That lack of detail creates the need for national, regional, and industry standards.

18 From which area(s) do you use international standards?

- 168 Generalities, Terminology Standardization and Documentation
142 Testing
133 Sociology, Services, Company Organization and Management, Quality, Administration and Transport
132 Environment, Health Protection and Safety
111 Electrical engineering
104 Electronics
88 Metrology and measurement, Physical phenomena
83 Manufacturing engineering
79 Mechanical systems and components for general use
78 Information technology, Office machines
63 Telecommunications, Audio and video engineering
57 Rubber and plastics industries
56 Metallurgy
53 Packaging and distribution of goods
51 Construction materials and building
50 Fluid systems and components for general use
49 Energy and heat transfer engineering
48 Chemical technology
44 Materials handling equipment
42 Paint and colour industries
38 Health care technology
37 Petroleum and related technologies
37 Civil engineering
31 Road vehicles engineering
28 Glass and ceramic industries
28 Domestic and commercial equipment, Entertainment, Sports
26 Textile and leather technology
24 Mathematics, Natural sciences
23 Railway engineering
23 Food technology
22 Image technology
20 Paper technology
19 Aircraft and space vehicle engineering
18 Clothing industry
18 Agriculture
18 Mining and minerals
16 Shipbuilding and marine structures
14 Wood technology
14 Military engineering
12 Precision mechanics, Jewellery



International Federation of Standards Users

Results of the iFAN survey on the use of international standards

May 2002



Information about Participation

- **907 visits to the questionnaire page**
- **288 completed questionnaires from 52 countries**
 - **188 from European region (25 countries)**
 - **52 from American region (8 countries)**
 - **39 from Asian region (13 countries)**
 - **5 from Australian region (2 countries)**
 - **4 from African region (4 countries)**



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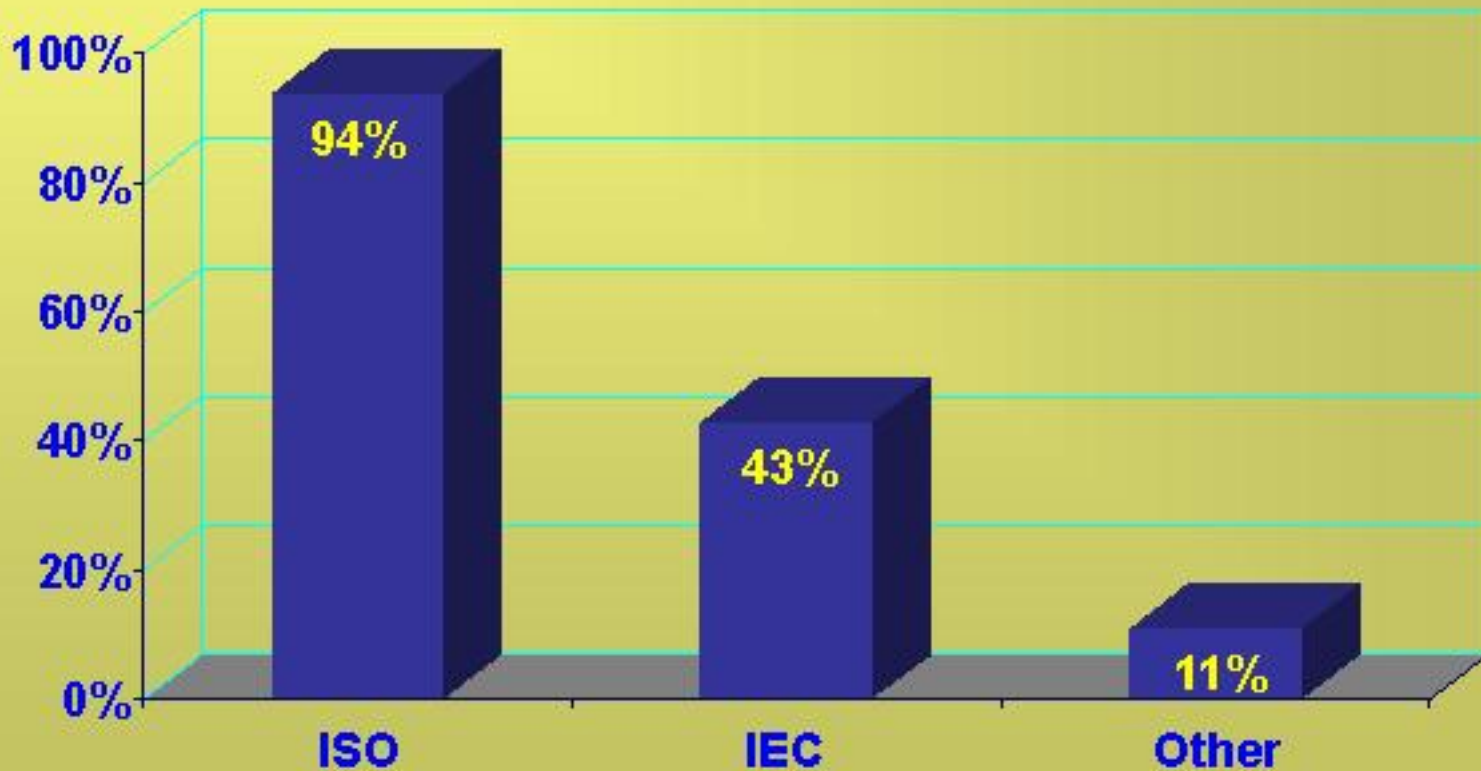
TOP 10: From which area(s) do you use standards?

- 1 Generalities, Terminology Standardization and Documentation;**
- 2 Testing;**
- 3 Sociology, Services, Company Organisation and Management, Quality, Administration and Transport;**
- 4 Environment, Health Protection and Safety;**
- 5 Electrical engineering;**
- 6 Electronics;**
- 7 Metrology and Measurement, Physical Phenomena;**
- 8 Manufacturing Engineering;**
- 9 Mechanical Systems and Components for general use;**
- 10 Information Technology, Office machines;**



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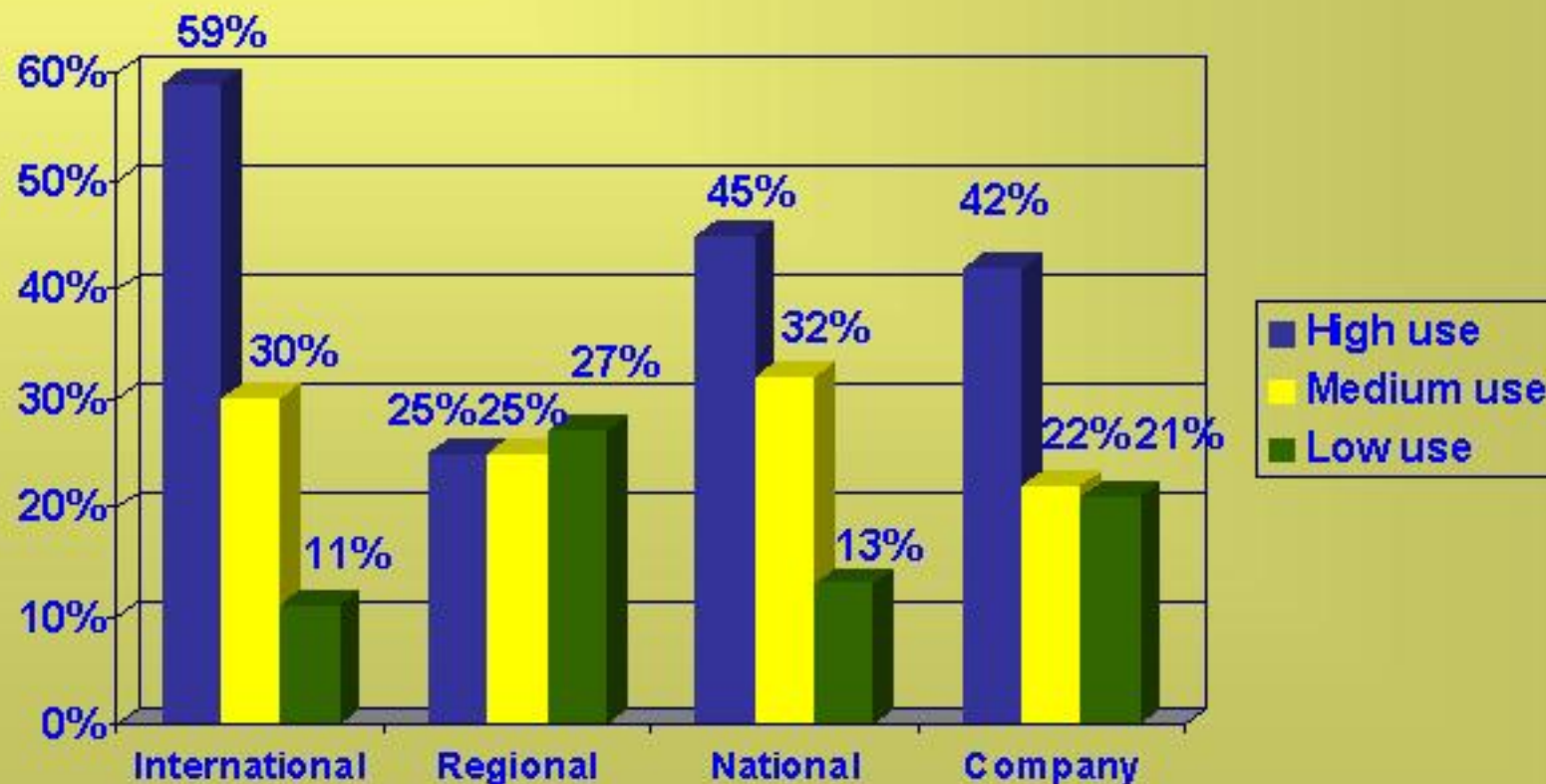
Which international standards do you use?





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To what extent do you use international, regional, national and/or corporate standards?

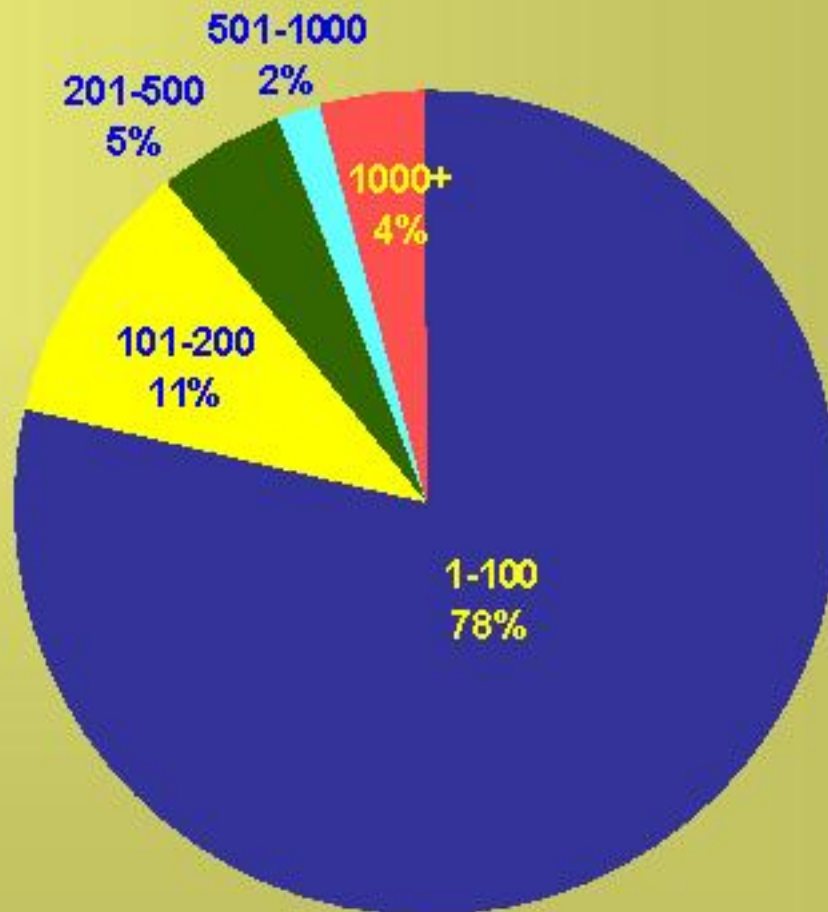
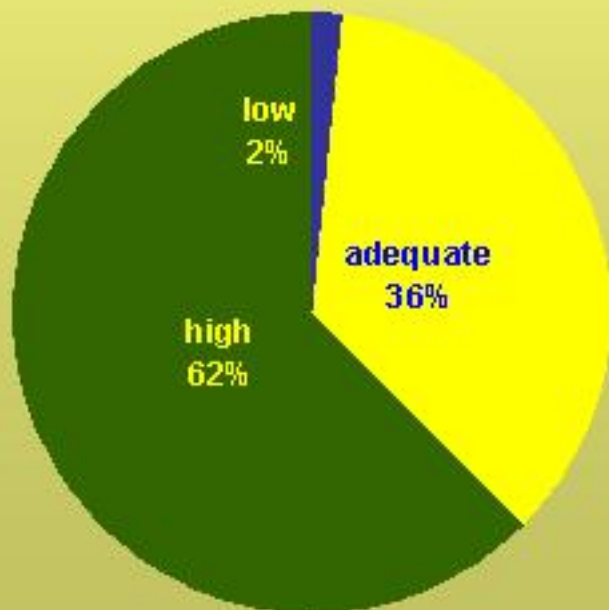




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How many international standards do you order every year?

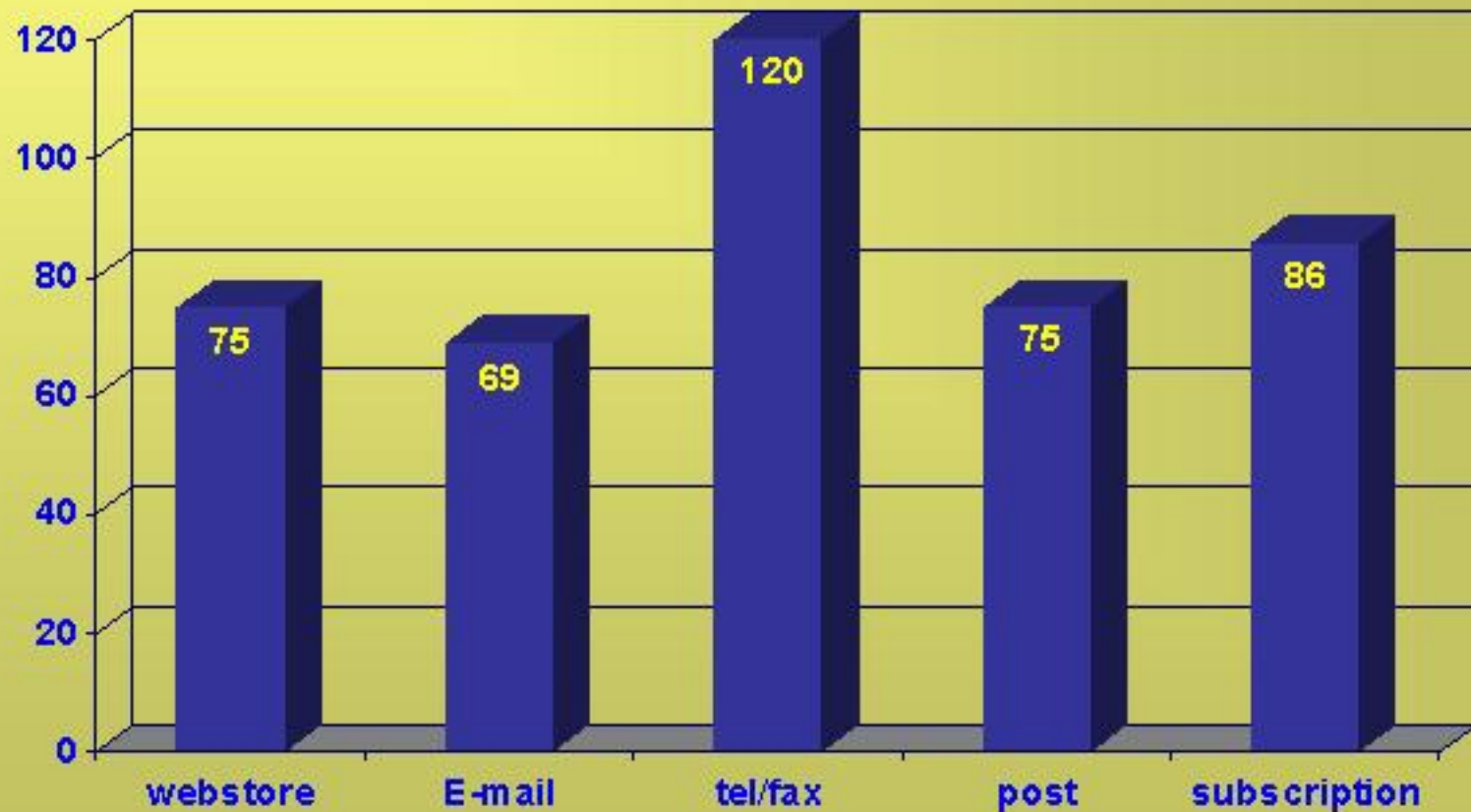
Do you consider that the prices of international standards are:





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How do you order international standards?

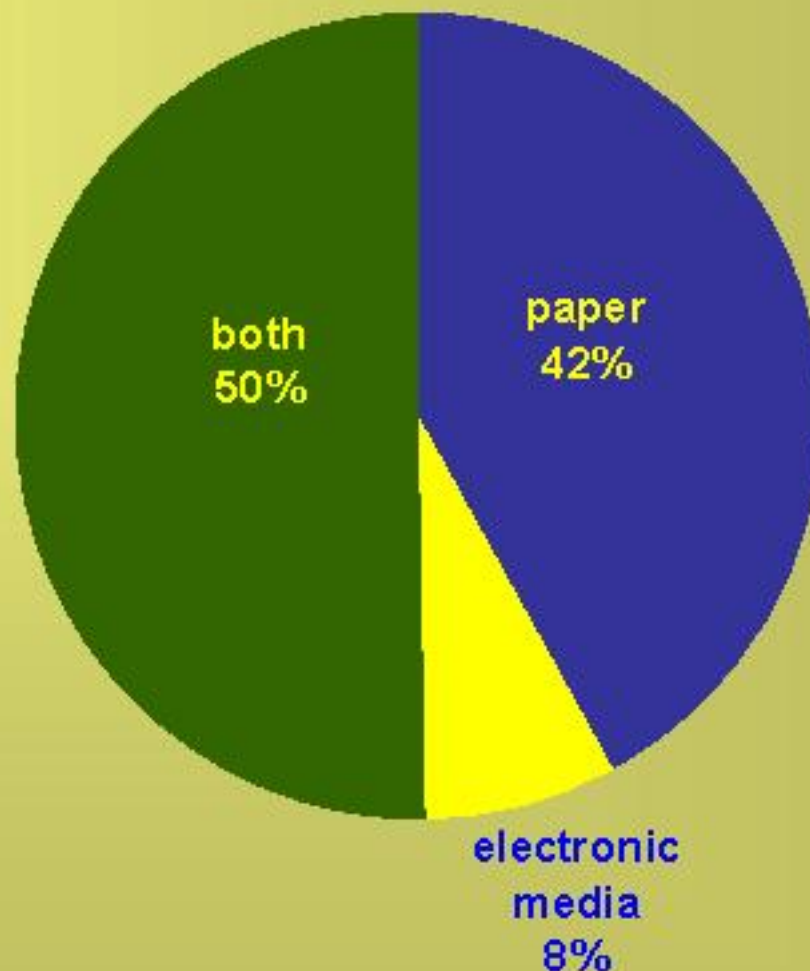
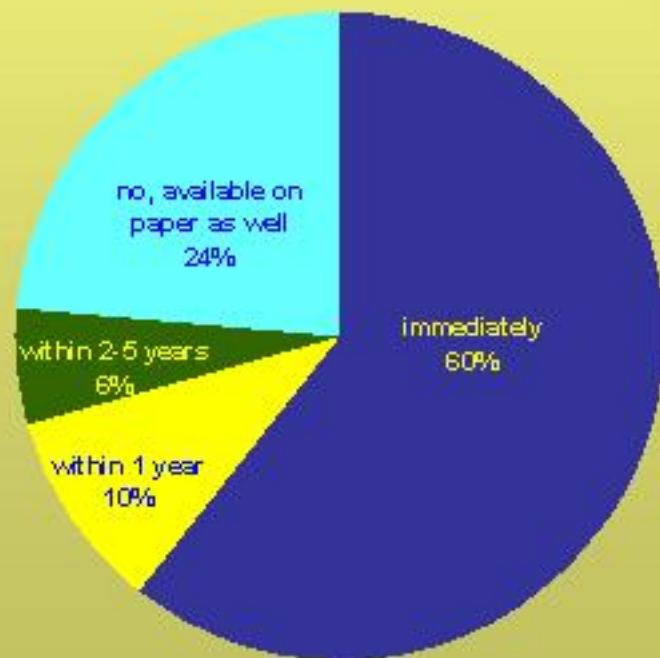




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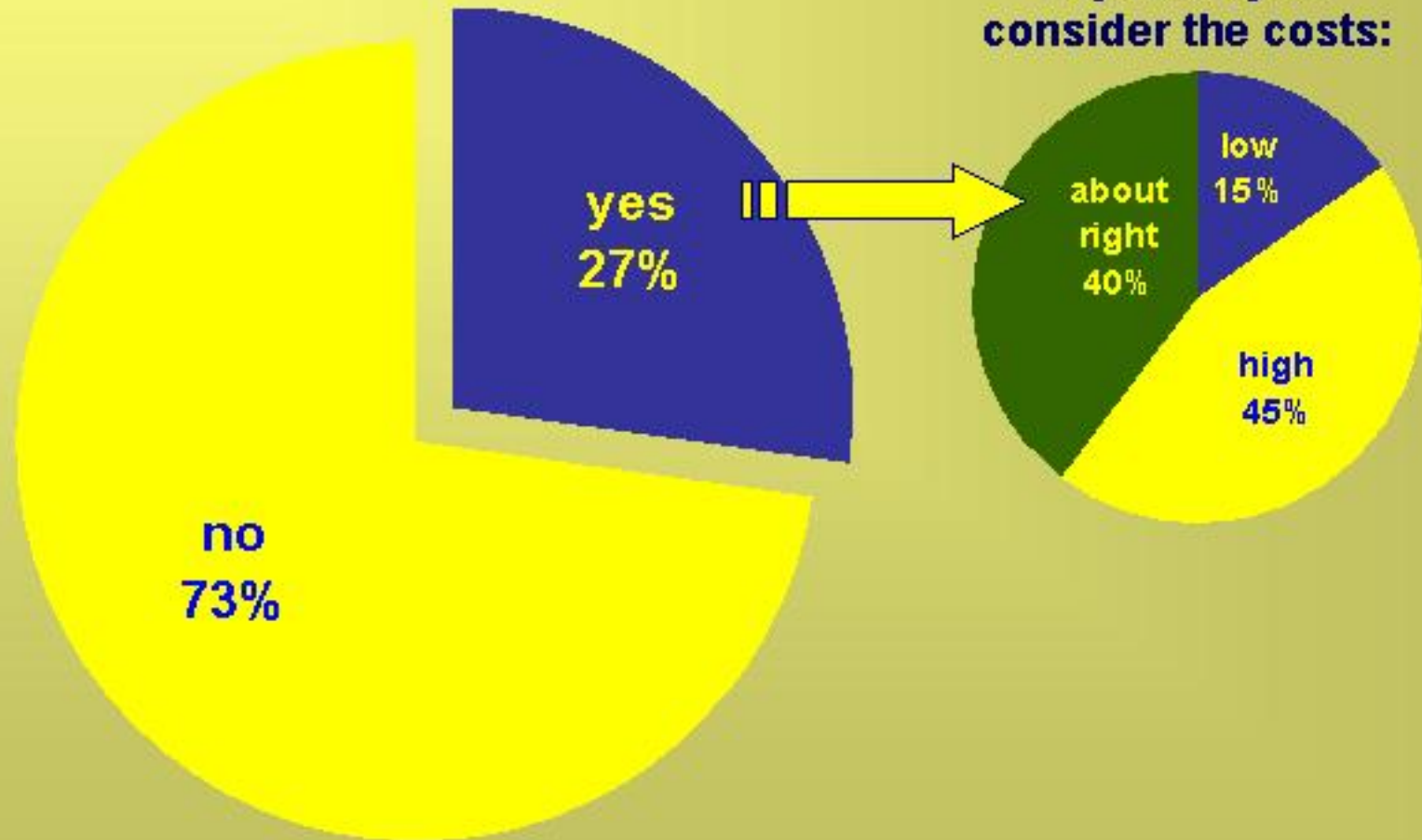
On which media do you use your standards?

If international standards were distributed only on electronic media, would that be acceptable to you?





Do you network your standards?

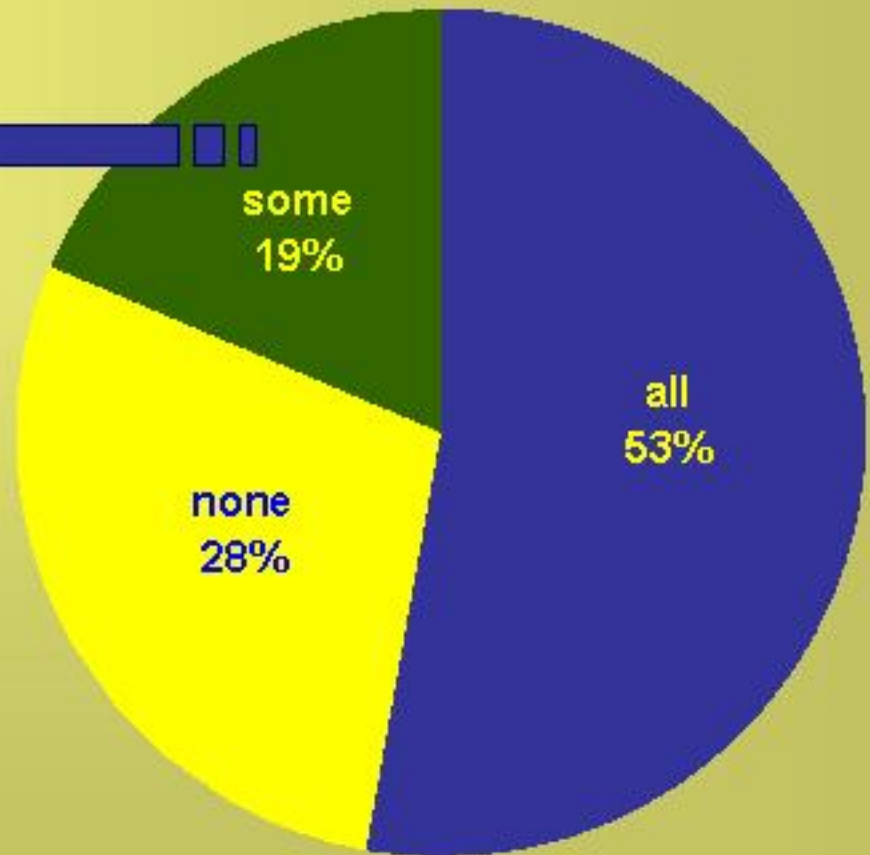




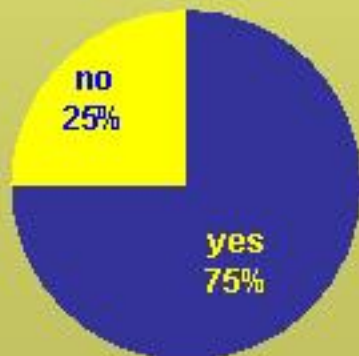
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Do you archive withdrawn and replaced standards?

- Related to SHE, legislation, quality
- Related to contracts
- Related to business need
- Related to comp. standards
- Related to products
- Previous heavy use
- We made it our business



Are lists of withdrawn Standards in catalogues useful?

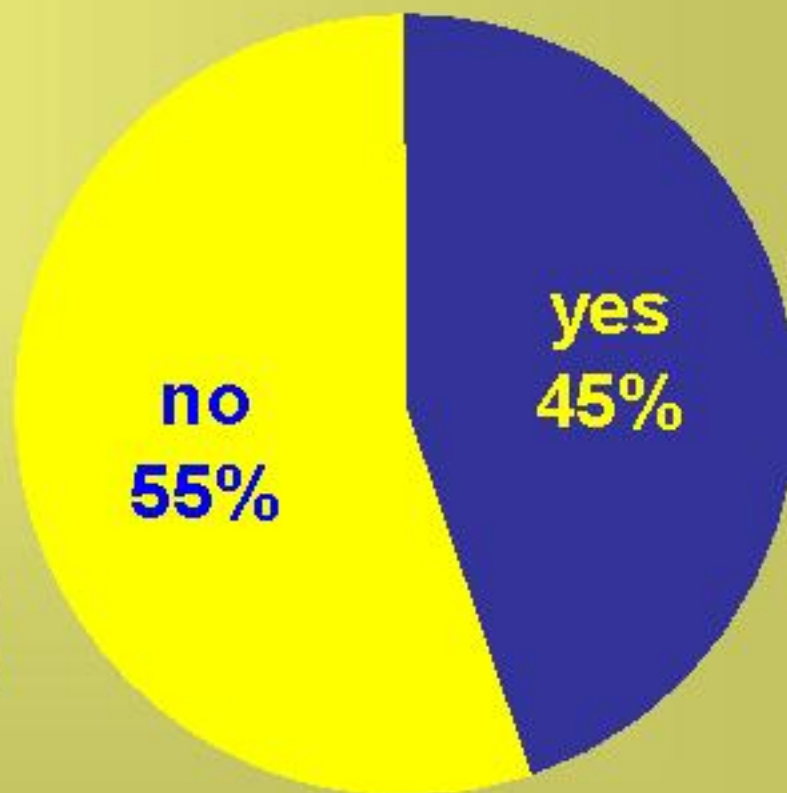




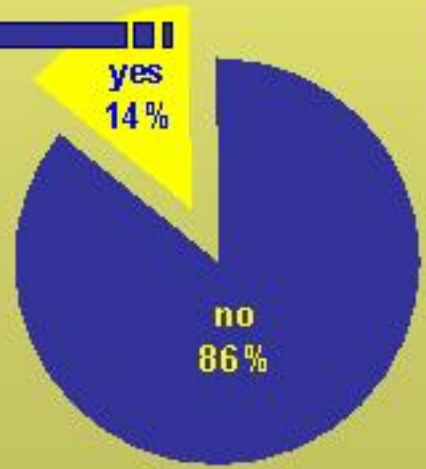
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Do you use international standards handbooks?

Do you use international value added products other than international standards handbooks?



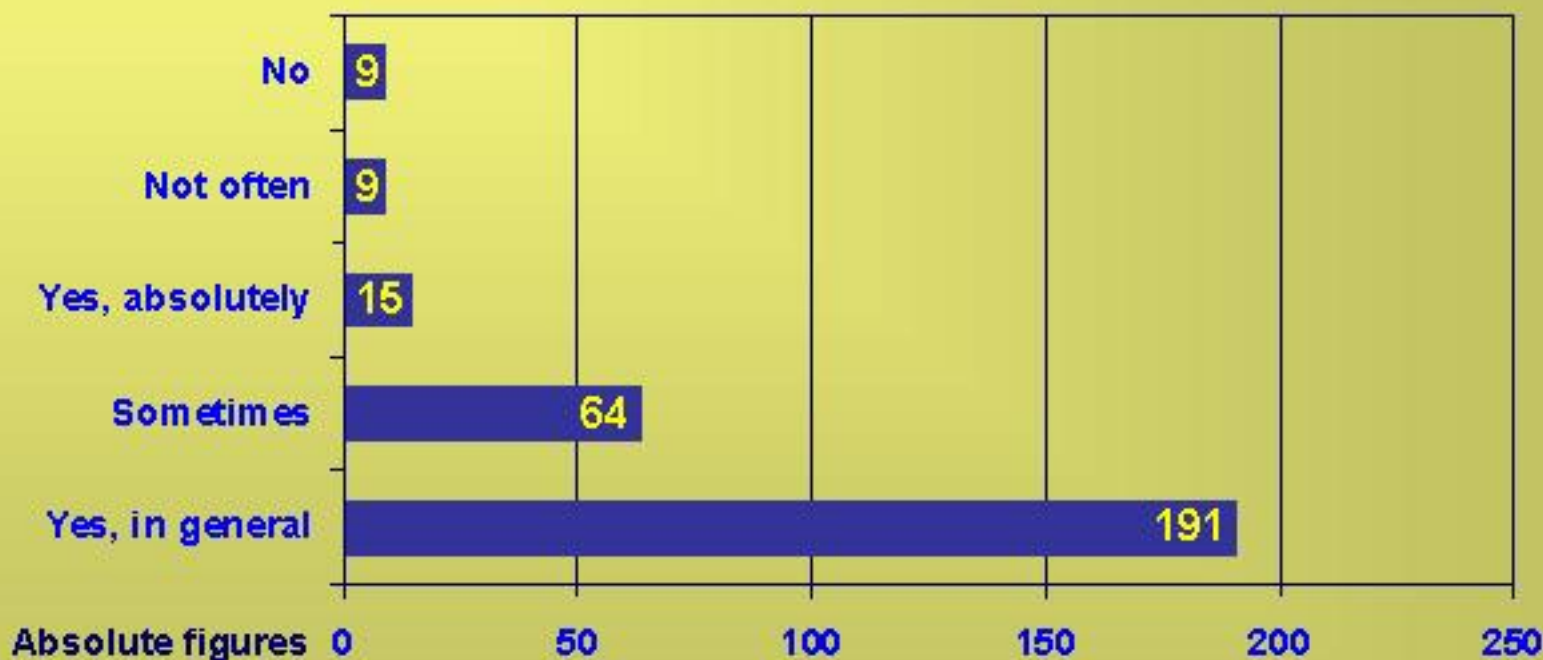
- WebPages
- Reports
- Guides
- Search utilities
- Magazines
- Perinorm
- Catalogues
- Databases
- CD-ROM's





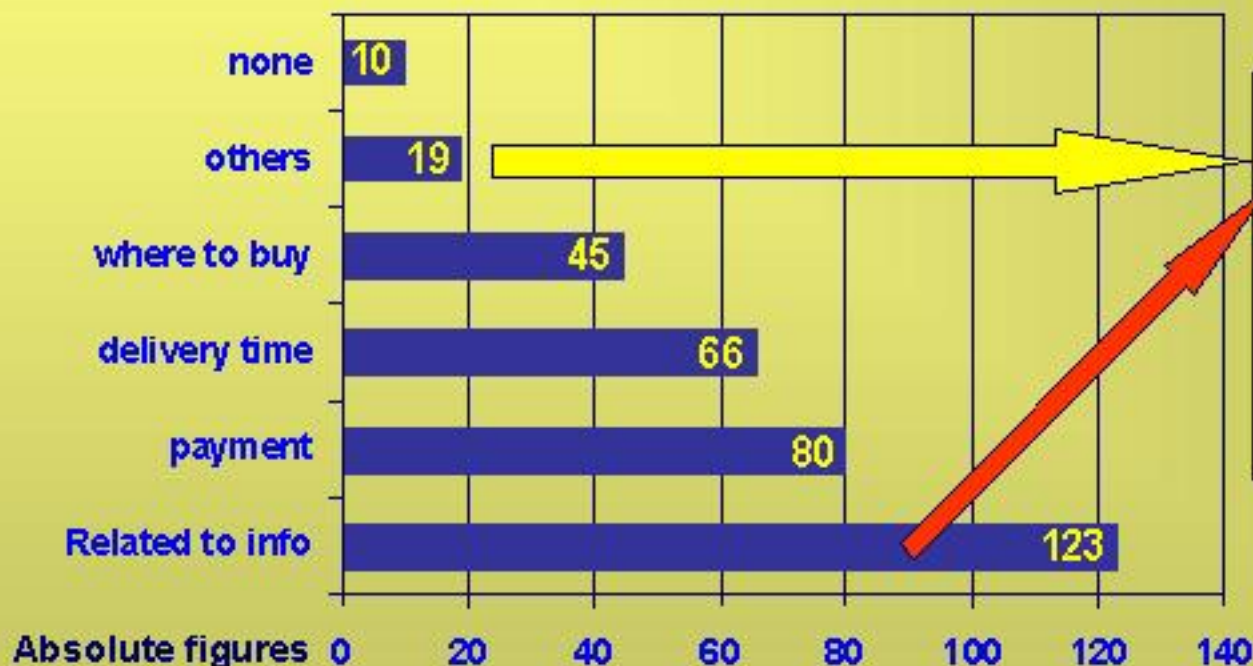
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Do you consider the content of international standards to be adequate with respect to the state of technology?





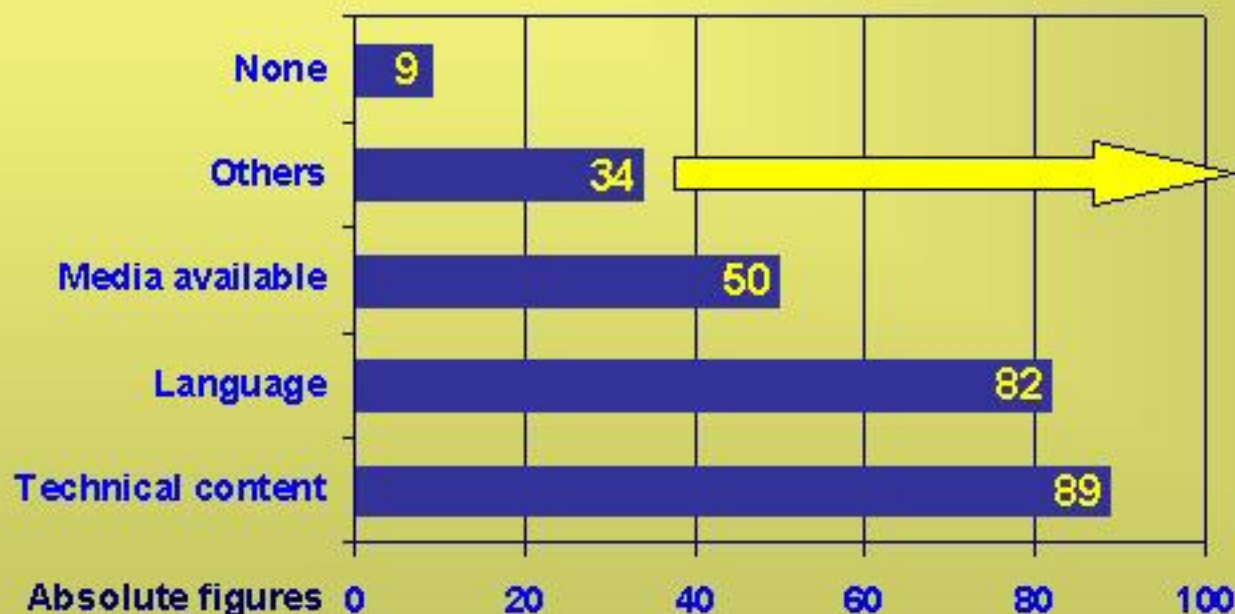
What are your greatest problems in ordering international standards?



- Identification appropriate standard or its issue
- No information on content available prior to purchase
- Delay of national adoptions / translations
- Sales policies and costs
- Where to buy



What are your greatest problems in using international standards?



- Conflicting scopes, terminology, consistency, layout, maintenance
- Frequency of changes
- Harmonisation between standards and legislation
- Lack of technical strength due to compromises
- Cross references
- Missing national adoptions / translations
- Costs (copy / networking)
- Sometimes bad scan quality electronic copies